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1933 Memorandum

Comment on acreage reduction proposals "A" and "B".

The economic background and the immediate objectives in both proposals being the same, and in accord with the facts of the situation and my views as to objective, I will omit any attempt at detailed discussion.

While both proposals embrace the situation generally as I see it and as has been expressed by farmers and leaders, proposal "B" is the more acceptable.

It is the expressed view of such organizations as the cotton cooperatives, the farm organizations and of Extension workers, as well as the farmers themselves, that if any substantial acreage is taken out of the planted crop of 1933, it must be done immediately. And it was also their view that a fair cash offer accompanied with options on government cotton at a moderate price would be necessary to achieve this end.

The first serious objection to proposal "A" is contained in the first paragraph. The offer would apply at some indefinite date, on some indefinite amount of land, in some indefinite locality. It is the opinion of the organizations and individuals mentioned, as well as my own opinion, that farmers will not sign such an agreement in sufficient numbers to warrant an attempt to apply it. It would involve so much explanation, even where a farmer might be convinced, that it would greatly delay the sign-up and add greatly to the cost. To take lands out of the cotton acreage at once leaves time for the production of soilbuilding or other summer crops. There is a natural antipathy on the part of the farmer to destroy a crop. The longer destruction is delayed the greater the difficulties there will be in taking cotton lands out of production this year. Indeed it may be impossible at a later date to do it at all. Director Duncan of the Alabama Extension Service in a letter written June 2nd expresses grave doubt if it is not already too late to take cotton lands out of production this year. He accompanied that letter with a proposed holding movement, which I take it is deemed out of the question.

Whatever the government's contract may be, delay would undoubtedly bring much difficulty at the time of enforcement. There is the question of lack of uniformity of application. Lack of uniform application would give rise to complaints of discrimination

and unfairness. If the advantage were not clearly on the side of the farmer, after long deliberation on his part, there is grave doubt that contracts could be executed. No contract has yet been made by the cooperatives that did or would hold unless the farmer so elected.

Any delay in taking acreage out of cotton will give full opportunity for opposing opinion to organize and more effectively combat the move. The psychological situation now is favorable to immediate action. At the Memphis meeting the overwhelming expression of the farmers was to the effect that 85% are ready to plow up 20 to 30% of the crop if adequately reimbursed. Due to advance in crop development resistance has been increased, but those who would be charged with the responsibility of putting the plan into effect are of the opinion still that the farmers will go along if the cash consideration plus option is fair. They rather clearly understand that the carryover, plus the prospective crop, places them at a very great disadvantage and that there is imperative need for reducing the crop of the present year. They will insist, however, that the plan be uniform throughout the belt and that it be applied immediately so they can yet make some use of their land.

As to the effect upon the market, the plan to delay has no advantage over any other. When the trade understands that the objective is to reduce the crop of 1933 by three million bales, the plan to be applied to that end will make little if any difference at all.

As to machinery for execution of the plan there are several thousand individuals already in the field ready to move at short notice.